

YELTSIN ADVISOR PROCLAIMS
YELTSIN REFORM ERA OVER

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 1, 1996

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the record the text of Boris Yeltsin's human rights advisor Sergei Kovalev's letter of resignation.

Mr. Speaker, this devastating critique of the Yeltsin regime is most timely, considering the IMF's current considerations of a \$9 billion infusion into the Russian treasury. It also comes at a time when Prime Minister Chernomyrdin is here in the United States assuring the administration and other officials that all is well in Russia. All is not well Mr. Speaker, and those, like the administration, who still don't get it are plainly referred to by Mr. Kovalev as naive. I urge all Members to read this critical letter.

THE CASE AGAINST YELTSIN

(By Sergei Kovalev)

For the past six years I have considered it my duty to promote in every way possible the policy that can fairly be called the "democratic transformation of Russia" notwithstanding many reservations. For a long time that policy was closely linked with your name. You were the head of a country on the road to democracy, and at first, you were even considered the leader of the democrats. As long as you remained headed in that direction. I considered myself your ally, or, in those instances when you departed from the overall course or drastically slowed the tempo of advance, a member of the loyal opposition.

Russia's road to freedom never promised to be easy. Many difficulties were obvious from the very beginning. Many others cropped up unexpectedly. To overcome them, all of us—the government, society, each individual—had to make complicated and sometimes tragic decisions. The main things the country expected from you were the will to make changes and honesty. Especially honesty. In electing you, Russia saw not only a politician ready to demolish the former state structure, but a person who was sincerely trying to change himself, his views, his prejudices and his habits of rule. You convinced many—myself included—that humane and democratic values could become the foundation of your life, your work and your policies. We weren't blind. We saw the typical traits of a Communist Party secretary preserved in your behavior. But all Russia, like a man striving to overcome a serious defect, was struggling with itself. We understood you even when we did not love you.

In recent years, however, even though you continue to proclaim your undying devotion to democratic ideals, you have at first slowly, and then more and more abruptly, changed the course of government policy. Now your government is trying to turn the country in a direction completely contrary to the one proclaimed in August 1991. . . .

Beginning in late 1993 if not even earlier, you have consistently taken decisions which—instead of strengthening the rule of law in a democratic society—have revived the blunt and inhuman might of a state machine that stands above justice, law and the individual. . . .

During the tragic days of the fall of 1993 [when Yeltsin dissolved the Supreme Soviet], I decided to stand by you despite my serious inner doubts. I don't deny my responsibility for that support. I believed that the use of force was a tragic necessity given the immi-

nent threat of civil war. Even then I understood that the events of October might encourage the top leaders to perceive force as a convenient and familiar instrument for resolving political problems. But I hoped for a different outcome, that by overcoming the crisis of legitimacy and creating a basis for the rule of law in Russia, the president and the government would do everything possible for our country's peaceful and free development. To a very great extent, the outcome depended on you, Boris Nikolaevich. I believed that you would choose the second path. I was wrong.

The 1993 Constitution confers enormous powers on the president, but it also places enormous responsibilities on him: to be the guarantor of the rights and liberties of citizens, to safeguard their security and to protect law and order in the country. How have you discharged these duties? How have you fulfilled your responsibilities?

You have virtually halted judicial reform, which was designed to make the administration of justice truly independent from the other branches of government. You openly professed the principle: "Let the innocent suffer as long as the guilty are punished."

You loudly proclaimed the launching of a war on organized crime. In order to implement this, you granted exceptional, extralegal authority to the security ministries. The result? The criminals continue to roam freely, while law-abiding citizens have to tolerate the abuse of the uniformed forces without gaining the security they were promised.

You stated that your goal was the preservation and strengthening of the Russian Federation's territorial integrity. The result? A shameful and bungled civil war which has been raging in the North Caucasus for more than a year. Under the guise of strengthening Russia's defense capability, you've blocked all military reforms which would give Russia an effective modern army. The result? Spending on the army is growing, and the number of generals has increased to an indecent figure. In order to justify their existence, the term of service has been increased and draft deferments have been ended. Meanwhile, soldiers and officers are impoverished, ragged and hungry. And the degradation, ill-treatment and corruption, traditional in our army, are as prevalent as ever. Not surprisingly, tens of thousands of young men are evading this medieval recruitment like the plague.

You speak of a policy of openness, of transparency and of public accountability, yet at the same time you sign secret decrees concerning the most important matters of state. You create closed institutions, and you classify as secret ever more information about government operations and the state of the country. Presidential decisions are made almost in the same backroom fashion as in the era of the Politburo. It's no secret that you increasingly depend on the security services and on their system of clandestine information. Isn't it obvious to you how unreliable and tendentious this information is?

The thrust of your personnel policy is becoming clearer with each passing day. At first there were quite a few competent, honorable people around you. But you also enthusiastically welcomed individuals whose only virtue consisted in their personal loyalty to you. Gradually such loyalty has become your primary demand when recruiting staff, just as it was in the heyday of the Community Party. . . .

You began your democratic career as a forceful and energetic crusader against official deceit and party disposition, but you are ending it as the obedient executor of the will of the power-seekers in your entourage. You took an oath to build a government of the people and for the people, but instead you

have built a bureaucratic pyramid over the people and against the people. Moreover, having rejected democratic values and principles, you haven't stopped using the word "democracy" so that naive people may well believe that "democrats" remain in power in the Kremlin. Your policies have compromised the very word, and if democracy is fated to someday exist in Russia (and I believe it will), it will exist not because of you, but in spite of you.

HARRY KUBO CELEBRATES 25
YEARS AT HELM OF THE NISEI
FARMERS LEAGUE

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 1, 1996

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, on March 8, 1996, the Nisei Farmers League will celebrate its 25th anniversary. This will be the closing of an era with Harry Kubo at the helm and the dawning of a new era with him handing over the reins to Manuel Cunha, Jr. Harry will be stepping down as president but will remain on the board as president ex-officio.

AND THE DOVE OF PEACE WEPT,
TOO

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 1, 1996

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Marilyn Krantz of Philadelphia, in response to the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, was moved to pen the following poem entitled "And the Dove of Peace Wept, Too."

Feelings * * * shared by countless many,
Amidst the shock and grief,
In prayers and prose and poetry
Expressing horror and disbelief
That Israel's leader, Yitzhak Rabin
Had so mercilessly been slain—
And by one of his countrymen
Whose deed marked the return of Cain!
With the word "Peace" still on his lips
And his heart filled with hope anew
This Great man fell, and tears did flow,
And the Dove of Peace wept, too.
Reaching beyond Israel's boundaries,
This was a loss to all the world,
Leaders gathered from near and far
To join as mournful words unfurled
For this man who'd struggled to ensure
The survival of one small nation
And worked tirelessly to bring peace
In the Mideast—a great revelation!
Soldier, statesman, family man.
In his wisdom, he'd come to see
That war was no solution
And killing brings no victory.
May his memory be for a blessing,
Others will carry his ideas through;
This was promised amidst the tears,
And the Dove of Peace wept, too.
Yitzhak Rabin is with us yet:
He lives in every believing heart
That peace must and will be achieved,
And each dawn offers a new start.